



18. A monoclonal antibody having an affinity of  $> 10^8 \text{ M}^{-1}$  for the amino acid sequence YPYDVDPDYA, (SEQ ID NO: 1) as determined using a BIACORE® surface plasmon resonance system, wherein said monoclonal antibody is raised against a 13- or 14-amino acid containing epitope of human influenza virus haemagglutinin.
19. A monoclonal antibody having an affinity of  $10^9 - 10^{10} \text{ M}^{-1}$  for the amino acid sequence YPYDVDPDYA, (SEQ ID NO: 1) as determined using a BIACORE® surface plasmon resonance system, wherein said monoclonal antibody is raised against a 13- or 14-amino acid containing epitope of human influenza virus haemagglutinin.
20. The monoclonal antibody of claim 18 or claim 19, wherein said antibody is produced by hybridomas which are obtained by fusing mouse P3x63-Ag8.653 myeloma cells with B lymphocytes from Lou/C rats, said Lou/C rats having been immunized with a haemagglutinin peptide.
21. The monoclonal antibody of claim 18 or claim 19, wherein said antibody is produced by hybridomas which are obtained by fusing mouse P3x63-Ag8.653 myeloma cells with B lymphocytes from Lou/C rats, said Lou/C rats having been immunized with a haemagglutinin peptide, wherein said immunization is carried out with a haemagglutinin peptide coupled to keyhole limpet haemocyanin.
22. The monoclonal antibody of claim 18 or claim 19, wherein said antibody is produced by hybridoma R 3A12 deposited at the "Deutsche Sammlung für Mikroorganismen und Zellkulturen" under Accession No. DSM ACC2286 (08.10.1996).

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23. A method for the production of a monoclonal antibody against the epitope YPYDVDPDYA (SEQ ID NO: 1) comprising:
- (a) synthesizing a haemagglutinin peptide,
  - (b) immunizing a small mammal with said peptide,
  - (c) isolating B lymphocytes from the spleen of said mammal and fusing said lymphocytes with mouse P3x63-Ag8.653 myeloma cells to form clones,
  - (d) selecting clones formed in step (c) that produce an antibody which binds to a haemagglutinin peptide and to a haemagglutinin fusion protein, and
  - (e) selecting a clone from those selected in step (d) that produces an antibody with an affinity of  $> 10^8 \text{ M}^{-1}$  for the sequence YPYDVDPDYA and establishing said clone as a hybrid cell line.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein said haemagglutinin peptide is selected from the group consisting of acetyl-YPYDVDPDYAGSGSK ( $\epsilon$ -biotinoyl) amide (a derivative of SEQ ID NO: 2) and biotinoyl- $\epsilon$ -Aca-SGSGYPYDVDPDYA amide (a derivative of SEQ ID NO: 3).
25. The method of claim 23, wherein said haemagglutinin fusion protein is haemagglutinin-tagged glutathione-S-transferase.